

THE GATEWAY

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THE BIG BLUE ALBERTA SKY IS THE LIMIT University President Rod Fraser gives his last set of speeches to convocating students this week before moving off into retirement. This year, ceremonies were held in the Uniside Pavilion (better known as the Butterdome) because of centennial renovations being done on the Jubilee Auditorium. To read ruminations of newly degreed students on their education and new-found non-studenthood, turn the page for this issue's edition of "Streeters." Convocation ceremonies conclude tomorrow, to June.

SU may halt tobacco sales

JAKE TROUGHTON
Senior News Editor

A motion scheduled to be considered by Students' Council next week could see the Students' Union end tobacco sales at its businesses by the end of the month.

The SU recently banned smoking in its bars, and Science Councilor Stephen Kirkham, who introduced the motion, said he sees ending tobacco sales as a natural next step. In part, he said, he's concerned about the political consistency of the SU, which last year received a grant to run its Tobacco Reduction Project campaign.

"Last year we had a \$50 000 grant from AADAC to reduce tobacco use on campus, yet at the same time the Students' Union was profiting off the sale of tobacco products in the realm of over \$30 000 a year," he said. "It doesn't quite make sense."

Canadian astronaut lands on campus to give lecture

HANNA NASH
News Writer

While the idea of being blasted away from Earth on a space shuttle would intimidate most people, astronauts like Canada's Bjarni Tryggvason find that the excitement and danger are what make his job so unique and perfectly suited for him.

Tryggvason, who came to share his experience in space with University of Alberta staff and students during a day-long research symposium last Thursday, has worked as an astronaut for the Canada Space Agency for the past 20 years. He has made one trip to space in his career, during an August 1997 expedition aboard the space shuttle Discovery after training in Moscow with Americans and Russians.

It was then that Tryggvason was finally given the opportunity to perform his tests on the fundamental differences between fluids in outer space.

"It took about one year to prepare for that specific flight," he said. "But a lot of the experiments—and devel-

oping the hardware—took about three to four years, and all of that was done after doing background training, which took two to three years. So it was a long process."

"I had a great view of the Earth. It's a bit like being in a dreamland."

ASTRONAUT BJARNI TRYGGVASON, ON HIS 1997 TRIP TO SPACE

Even though it took a lot of time and effort for Tryggvason to prepare to go into space, it was a rewarding trip for him to take. The risk associated with space travel didn't, and still doesn't, seem to bother him when he thinks about the time he spent on Discovery.

"It was a great experience," said Tryggvason. "I had a great view of the Earth. It's a bit like being in a dreamland. You're doing things that you're familiar with, but in a different kind of setting that you're unfamiliar with."

PLEASE SEE ASTRONAUT • PAGE 2



ROCKET MAN Canadian astronaut Bjarni Tryggvason spoke on campus about his research and experiences last week.

"What I think the SU ultimately needs to do is decide, at the end of the day, what's more important—that we focus on the health and well-being of students on campus, or that we make money?"

STEPHEN KIRKHAM, SCIENCE COUNCILOR

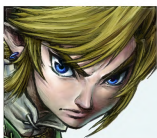
Though Kirkham originally moved the potential ban, he now says he hopes that Council will strike an ad-hoc committee to deal with the matter in the context of a broader examination of the health and well-being of students. He argued that the SU needs to prioritize its goals, including health, financial issues and other matters, to provide a proper context to decisions such as the tobacco ban.

"What I think the SU ultimately needs to do is decide, at the end of the day, what's more important—that we focus on the health and well-being of students on campus, or that we make money?" he said.

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Overwhelming E3

Read about Daniel Kaszor's quest to find out the truth about the world's largest video game trade show.

FEATURE, PAGE 6



Colourize!

Marvel as Logic Puzzle finally moves out of the '50s and into Technicolour, much to Robot's chagrin.

COMICS, PAGE 12

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colophon

The Gateway is created using Macintosh computers, Union Powerlook 1500 flatbed scanners, and a Nikon Super Cool Scan optical film scanner. Adobe InDesign is used for layout. Adobe Illustrator is used for vector images, while Adobe Photoshop is used for raster images. Adobe Acrobat is used to create PDF files which are burned directly to plates to be mounted on the printing press. Text is set in a variety of sizes, styles, and weights of Helvetica, Knapex, Joanna, and Arima. The masthead is the Gateway's sister page. The Gateway's games of choice are DVD, Super Mario World 2, World's Island and chess.

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Doing research in space a 'dangerous job': Tryggvason

ASTRONAUT - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Tryggvason's lecture on campus last week focused on how fluids act in space, which is his main area of research and interest.

"In my research, I look at the behaviour of fluids as they impact material science, biological experiments, and how fluids fundamentally behave in the space environment," explained Tryggvason.

"Most of my research is in how water, liquid metals, fluids that are

"You don't get paid to be scared. It's a statistic that six to eight per cent of people who go into space die during their attempt. You can't find a more dangerous job."

BJARNI TRYGGVASON

used to grow protein crystals and alloys are all influenced when in space."

Although the main focus of Tryggvason's job is to train for flying into space, he also does a lot of work with the engineering community that supports the whole space station operation. Working closely with engineers is very important, Tryggvason explained, since he and other astronauts must make sure that the hardware used in space will function

properly, and is built to interact with people.

"The engineers get involved with the scientists who are building experiments to make sure that they're designing experiments in such a way that they're experiments in space," he said.

"People don't always think of all the issues that you run into. ... You don't get paid to be scared. It's a statistic that six to eight per cent of people who go into space die during their attempt. You can't find a more dangerous job."

CAMPUS CRIME BEAT

Compiled by Jake Troughton
(news@gateway.ualberta.ca)

THIEF MOVES QUICKLY

At 3:20pm on 26 May, two female students reported their credit cards had been stolen from their backpacks in the Fine Arts Building. Within a matter of hours, one of the complainants had \$1000 worth of merchandise put on her card, while the other had \$600 put on hers.

THIEF CAUGHT QUICKLY

At 6:20pm on 27 May, a student reported the theft of his mountain bike from the Natural Resources Engineering Facility. Based on the description of the bicycle provided by the complainant, a

suspect was identified near 87 Ave and 112 Street. The bicycle was confirmed as the one recently stolen and the non-affiliated male suspect was arrested for being in possession of stolen property.

DETERMINED HOULIGAN

At 1:50pm on 29 May, constables observed two males throwing road signs and barriers onto 87 Avenue near 114 Street. One of the non-affiliated males was issued a violation notice for stunting. He was later observed knocking a bus bench over, netting him a second ticket and a ride home.

OFFICE TARGETED AGAIN

Just before 2pm on 29 May, 5-0 received a report of a break and enter into an office in the Van Vleet Center. The same office had been broken into earlier in May. Two flat-screen monitors were stolen in this incident, and the Edmonton Police Service forensics unit is investigating.

STOP THIS, OFFICER!

Around 7:45pm on 29 May, a constable on foot patrol observed a yellow Monte Carlo stunting near 87 Ave and 114 Street. The passenger in the vehicle gave the constable the finger as the vehicle sped past. The constable radioed to a patrol unit, who stopped the vehicle east of the Physical Education building. The driver was found to be intoxicated and was issued a 24-hour suspension and a violation notice for stunting. His vehicle was towed.

WELL-EQUIPPED TRESPASSER

At 12:50pm on 31 May, constables observed a male behaving in a suspicious manner near the south end of HUB mall. He was stopped for an equipment violation on his bicycle and found to have been previously trespassed from University property. He was also found to be in possession of break and enter tools, including a torch, pliers, pry bar, and metal file, and was arrested for tres-

passing and possession of the tools and turned over to EPS.

HUB A LOITER RECEPTACLE

At 3pm on 1 June, constables observed two non-affiliated males loitering near the south end of HUB Mall. Both males were recognized by the constables as having been previously trespassed from University property. They were approached, and a criminal record check revealed that both had outstanding warrants for their arrest. A search of one of the males revealed a concealed knife. Both were turned over to the EPS.

WRONG TURN

Just before 12:30pm on 2 June, a vehicle was stopped for driving the wrong way on a one-way on 110 Street and 88 Ave. The non-affiliated female driver displayed obvious signs of marijuana intoxication and was issued a 24-hour suspension. Her vehicle was subsequently towed.

STREETERS

It's convocation week, and campus is crawling with newly graduated former students.

What have you got out of your university education?



Melissa Lazaruk
Bachelor of
Science/Bachelor
of Education



Lisa Billesberger
Bachelor of
Science



Ken Kaneda
Bachelor of
Science



Farina Remtulla
Bachelor of
Science

Well, I spent lots of money. I've grown up. I think that's the most important thing. The University has taught me that it's not just about school. It's about growing up and becoming who I am, and meeting lots of people and barely going to class and partying. That was my university life.

I've gotten a lot of experience and knowledge, and I have a better idea of what I'd like to do with my future.

Other than the huge debt, I got my piece of paper, my degree, I guess. Mostly experience working with other people, learning to work with groups. Hopefully that will translate into something good in the industry.

I think I've grown more as a person. I have a different view on what's going on in society today, and I take more of a multi-dimensional approach to analyzing situations or issues that occur in society.

Compiled and photographed by Chris O'Leary and Jake Troughton

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Outrage over Grewal tapes aimed at the wrong target

CONSERVATIVE MP GURMANT GREWAL no doubt knew when he recorded conversations with two key Liberals that the recordings would cause a media storm upon their release, but he probably expected that more of that storm's fury would actually be focused on the Liberals.

You couldn't blame him for thinking that. The tapes are of conversations among Grewal, Health Minister Ujjal Dosanjh, and Tim Murphy, the prime minister's chief of staff, in which the two Liberals allegedly offer Grewal political rewards in exchange for abstaining from a confidence vote. The NDP, Bloc Québécois and others have called on the RCMP to investigate whether the conversations violated criminal code provisions against attempting to buy the vote of an MP. Yet much of the media coverage has focused on Liberal counter-accusations against Grewal that he aggressively pursued a deal that the virtuous Liberals refused to buy into.

Now, Grewal shouldn't be free from scrutiny in this matter. He took part in the conversations too, and his motivations remain unclear. But the extent to which the Liberals have successfully manipulated the media coverage, and the sheer ease with which they've done so, is disheartening.

Their defense basically amounts to, "He started it"—which shouldn't work any better in Parliament than on the playground—and an unsubstantiated, "There was no deal." With that, the Liberals quickly put the Tories on the defensive, as reporters rushed to question Grewal's integrity, or the Conservatives' reasons for taking nearly two weeks to release the full tapes—which, while certainly questionable and a huge strategic blunder if nothing else, has absolutely nothing to do with the question of whether Dosanjh and Murphy acted inappropriately.

In fact, almost nothing the Liberals have said in response to the scandal has been relevant. Whether or not Grewal initiated the discussions on the tapes does not change how Dosanjh and Murphy acted on them. And, of course, there was no deal made; for one thing, if there had been, then Grewal wouldn't have released those tapes. But beyond that, the tapes show the two Liberals explaining how to go about the process in a way that will allow the parties to deny that a deal was made.

"You have to be able to say that I did not make a deal. That's very important," Dosanjh explains in one of the recordings. But, he adds later, "I think we all understand what we are talking about." Murphy, Dosanjh and the rest of the Liberals are, in short, issuing exactly the sort of denials that they are heard on tape preparing themselves to make in the event of a non-deal deal. Sadly, though, it appears to be enough to shift the media's attention to the opposition.

The Tories' media relations through this situation have been nothing short of disastrous, and frankly exacerbate questions about their preparedness to form a government. But whatever this story says about the Conservatives, it says as much or more about the Liberals. What Murphy and Dosanjh did was almost certainly unethical, and quite possibly criminal (though that's a matter for the courts to decide, should it go that far). While Grewal may not be free of sin in this matter himself, the Liberals should be facing a much larger share of the fury.

JAKE TROUGHTON
Senior News Editor

This just in: up is down, down is up

THIS MONDAY, APPLE CEO Steve Jobs announced that the Macintosh operating system will now be ported to work on Intel 86x processors.

Now, to most of you guys, this means nothing, but to diehard Mac fans like myself, this is like a Catholic hearing that the Pope isn't so hot on that Jesus fellow and might be following the teachings of Satan from now on. Ugh, I think I have to wait the thought of OS X running on a Wintel machine out of my head.

DANIEL KLOSER
Editor-in-Chief



LETTERS

No broadcast no fault of TSN's

Simply for your information, in the case of the East-West Bowl, TSN did not "yank their broadcast at the last minute because they thought their viewers would rather see tennis, Sportscentre, and Junior A hockey" ("Stop playing around with CIS, TSN," 26 May).

As you might imagine, we, at the CIS, do not always agree with TSN's decisions in regards to programming. But I think it is important not to blame them when they are not at fault. This said, continue your outstanding work with all the team at the Gateway—we always enjoy reading you guys.

MICHEL BELANGER
Communications Manager
Canadian Interuniversity Sports (CIS)

Enjoy your lunch, O'Leary, and watch the 'hobo etiquette'

In response to Chris O'Leary's misguided editorial about his encounter with a homeless man ("When is it enough?" 26 May), I would just like to say how disappointed I am that people like O'Leary seem to think that they've "done enough" in regards to the homeless problem.

I'm not sure exactly how much Mr O'Leary gave this homeless man, but I'd be willing to bet it is far less

than what he spent on his lunch that day, or how much he spent on beer the following weekend. As someone of at least the middle class who is enjoying, among countless other things, a top-rate university education, the scorn with which O'Leary treats this man in print—admonishing him for his lack of "hobo etiquette" among other things—is despicable and smacks of an upper-class, look-down-upon attitude towards those less fortunate. We see such attitudes all-too-often in our society, and I would expect better from a university student.

I would suggest to Mr O'Leary that the next time a homeless man asks him for some more, he think about all the things he has, and what kind of conditions this man has to put up with every day, and reach into his pocket for a few more quarters. Or, he could keep up with his better-than-thou attitude and enjoy the lunch that that homeless man will be going without.

TARA PICARNE
Arts II

Episode III was terrible, Kaszow and Larocque

I'm not sure how brainwashed by George Lucas you so-called "Star Wars editors," Daniel Kaszow and Mike Larocque, are, but I can't believe their review of the latest edition of Lucas' space tale, *Star Wars: Episode III—Revenge of the Sith* ("The power of the Dark Side," 26 May). Perhaps they actually fell asleep in the theatre, and instead were reviewing what they imag-

ined the movie to be like, because the piece of shit displayed on the screen was nowhere near "redeeming" the misguided prequel trilogy.

Episode III picked up right where the other two prequels left off in terms of grandiose, overblown special effects that only serve to show how much fun Lucas can have with a computer, as well as continuing the prequel tradition of horribly wooden dialogue and character relationships that are implied, but never actually seen. It's almost amazing how Lucas actually manages to make the real, human actors look less expressive and emotive than their droid or computer-generated counterparts.

And that's not even getting into the surprising number of laugh-out-loud bad scenes, from the Emperor's over-the-top delivery in any scene he's in to the crowning glory of unintentionally funny cinema, the scene where the seven-foot, all-black Darth Vader attempts to cry for his lost love using a metal body and a computerized-sounding James Earl Jones voice.

Maybe Kaszow and Larocque are just stuck in fan-boy mode, or in their childhood, but their suggestion that this is "satisfying finish to the Star Wars franchise" is almost laughable. Enjoy your summer blockbuster season, boys—they'll be plenty more big, dumb, CGI-heavy action movies to come. Maybe those who redeem the shitty state of Hollywood movies. Yeah, right.

FRANCIS WONG
Science II

Sports hardly nerdy, Prusakowski

Upon opening the Sports section of the Thursday, 26 May edition of the Gateway I literally spit my coffee all over myself.

Ross Prusakowski's article ("Sports nerds of the world, unite!") lacked almost all semblance of common sense. Prusakowski's thesis that sports nerds are ostracized more than "regular" nerds is preposterous. If anything, sports nerds get away with significantly more nerd-ness because the topic that they associate themselves with is ostensibly "cool" and "active."

I would like to see Mr Prusakowski start up a conversation about Babylon 5 or Pokémon and compare the reaction he gets to talking about football.

GEOFF WOADDE
Engineering III

Letters to the editor should be e-mailed to gateway@gateway.alberta.ca or dropped off at room 3-04 of the Students' Union Building.

The Gateway reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity, and to refuse publication of any letter it deems racist, sexist, libelous, or otherwise hateful in nature.

Letters to the editor should be no longer than 350 words, and should include the name, student identification number, program, and year of study of the author; to be considered for publication. Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. So don't try it.

'Deep Throat' can teach us something about *real* investigative journalism



IRIS TSE

Earlier last week, Mark Felt was revealed as the man who they called "Deep Throat," the much-suspected informant in the Watergate scandal whose identity was one of America's most tightly guarded secrets. This legendary figure, who directly triggered the events that led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon, was in fact an ex-FBI agent who once occupied the second-highest slot in the FBI chain of command.

Whether Watergate was political sabotage or a national wakeup call—whether Felt was a disgruntled employee who didn't get the promotion he wanted or a patriotic whistle-blower—is still up for history to determine. However, one thing we can learn from this event is the importance of journalism as a, if not the, government watchdog.

Admittedly, I am too young to have been there as Watergate unfolded. In fact, I am even too young to have seen *All the President's Men* when it first came out in theatres. However, I am old enough to familiarize myself

with the major players who ushered the downfall of a presidency. Most important of all those players were the *Washington Post* reporters, Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, who tenaciously "followed the money" and eventually uncovered the corruption of the Nixon government. This, not hovering over the Neveland Ranch in the *Entertainment Tonight* helicopter, is what investigative journalism is all about.

However, investigative journalism isn't limited to determined writers. It also takes an editor and publisher with a strong backbone to put it into print. All that investigative reporting on Watergate wouldn't have taken place without the backing of Ben Bradlee, the legendarily flamboyant and daring former executive editor of the *Washington Post*. As he recalled his excitement in last week's live discussion, "As the story progressed, the clues all pointed higher up, into the White House itself, and of course ultimately to the president himself. What newspaperman could be against that?"

Unfortunately, with the current political climate and the onslaught of censorship towards the "liberal media," editors of Bradlee's courage and vision are more elusive than ever. During the late "weapons of mass destruction" reporting blitz, most newspapers, including such "liberal media" insti-

tutions as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, relied heavily on the incumbent administration's perspectives and gave too little critical examination of the way officials framed the events, issues, threats, and policy options.

That said, the shift of the journalistic attitude cannot be blamed entirely on the news media. Recently, the University of Connecticut conducted a survey of 112 003 high school students on First Amendment rights. A full 36 per cent of those surveyed believed that newspapers should get "government approval" of stories before publishing; 51 per cent say they should publish freely; 13 per cent have no opinion. The attitude of those 36 per cent of students—those who want their news neutered and pasteurized—is troubling and unhealthy. As readers, we should demand reporting with better critical perspectives and detailed analysis, not pre-approved government propaganda.

Watergate is more than a political milestone, it is also investigative journalism at its finest. The recent revelation of Deep Throat's identity not only gave the story an epilogue it deserves, it also reminded us that it's about time to adopt our old attitude: writers need to dig deeper into their stories, and readers must demand more out of their newspapers.

THE GATEWAY

The Gateway is looking for a few good **volunteer artists and designers** to help our paper look pretty.

We require those with the visual talents for **illustrations** to run with our fine articles, ranging from **political cartoons to feature graphics**.

Interested? Please contact:

Iris Tse, Design & Production Editor
at production@gateway.ualberta.ca

Education is more about product than process

Schools ignore the big picture, turn us into nothing but knowledge dumps



CHAD BARISCH

After my convocation this Wednesday at exactly 10:22am, I moved one more inevitable step closer to the "real world." Consequently, the following will be both pensive and meandering.

Reflecting on my own educational experience, six years and two degrees later, I cannot help but analyze the way our society approaches the notion of formal education. The combination of my recent graduation from the faculty of secondary education, and the fact that this means I am now a teacher, has further driven my reflection on what it means both to educate and to receive an education.

Although not without caveat, it seems as though our current educational system mirrors the all-mighty capitalist business mold. And it isn't simply kindergarten to grade twelve—our postsecondary system is the epitome of this model. It is, in its most crude form, a transactional model, predicated on the notion that one enters school as an empty container, with the expectation of being filled up with the correct amount and type of knowledge: no more and no less. This would explain all those who are after a business degree: school has become the modern-day panacea for the fiscally challenged.

The thought is that if you can earn a degree that will find you employment and allow the accumulation of more possessions than everyone else, your education has served you well. Never mind all that superficial knowledge that feeds the soul.

School has become less about the process and more about the product. By process, I refer to the individual experiences that one encounters as he or she progresses through their schooling. These experiences are characterized by little stories of triumph or personal difficulties brought on by interaction with the various "big pictures" that are the subjects of our study. It is here where we start to conceptualize our lives and, to an extent, our places within that big picture.

However, many people have become callous to the individual experiences of students at the micro level and, as a result, are only concerned with the larger frame that focuses on the all-important "end product." A significant paradigm shift must take place in the way we view education if the individual experiences of students are to be included in academic discourse, thus enabling

them to construct healthier and fulfilling meanings for themselves about the world they live in.

With my formal schooling complete, I find myself on a precipice of sorts, with a completely different way of living before me. Furthermore, I have come to a perplexing realization: I am now about to become part of the system that, until recently, I have been able to analyze from a distance. I find it amusingly ironic that I am questioning the very legitimacy of the system that I am about to become an integral cog in.

Nevertheless, as I contemplate my own life, on the cusp of a teaching career, I hope that I've constructed my own meanings in a healthy manner, within a conceptual framework that will allow me to focus on the experiences of my students; at the same time helping them to build both the academic and social tools they need to live fulfilling lives.

THE BURLAP SACK

This dual sack beating goes out to Edmonton's other sources of print news, specifically the esteemed *Sun* and its increasingly emulative brother, the *Journal*. Last week, these kings of New England and princes of Maine managed to set fantastically new lows in Edmonton news history.

First off, the *Sun* Now, of course, the *Sun* has never exactly been what we'll call a paragon of quality, but at the very least, they manage to, for the most part, report on news. Sensationalized, exploitative, big-headline news, but news. Last Thursday, though, on a day when the rest of the major dailies devoted their front pages to things like the Gomery inquiry, the Karla Homolka

trial, and a breakthrough at the U of A, the *Sun* decided to tell us that Ms Canada had officially become Ms Universe—complete with, of course, full-page picture. Evidently, it seems, "TITS" is now front-page news.

Of course, at least the *Sun* is just upholding its good name. The *Journal*, on the other hand, is trashing theirs. Saturday's edition featured the *Sun*-inspired headline "Intersection of Death." I guess they forget the exclamation points, and to mention blood.

Yad Edmonton newspapers. I'm moving to Toronto.

DAVID BERRY

The Burlap Sack is a semi-regular feature where a person or group who needs to be put in a sack and beaten is ridiculed in print. No sack beatings are actually administered.

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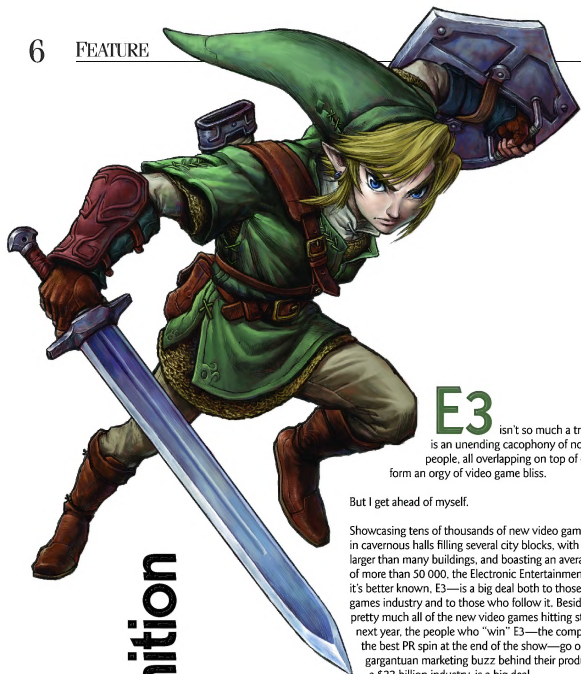
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Feature Story by Dan Kaszof

Visions of Bliss in High Definition

E3

isn't so much a trade show as it is an unending cacophony of noise, lights and people, all overlapping on top of one another to form an orgy of video game bliss.

But I get ahead of myself.

Showcasing tens of thousands of new video game products in cavernous halls filling several city blocks, with giant booths larger than many buildings, and boasting an average attendance of more than 50,000, the Electronic Entertainment Expo—or, as it's better known, E3—is a big deal both to those running the games industry and to those who follow it. Besides announcing pretty much all of the new video games hitting stores in the next year, the people who "win" E3—the companies with the best PR spin at the end of the show—go out with a gargantuan marketing buzz behind their products, which, in a \$22-billion industry, is a big deal.

The show isn't only important to industry insiders either: hardcore gamers make a point of following the by-the-minute reporting done from the show floor with rapt attention. However, just reading about the new games isn't enough. It may be an old metaphor to call something a pilgrimage and an event or location a Mecca, but if you go on a gaming message board and ask who has made their pilgrimage to LA, everyone will know exactly what you're talking about. It's a trip that every nerd dreams of, and is the hope of all those who while away their weekends bashing Bowser or killing the Covenant. Every video game geek knows that, at least once in their lives, they need to go to E3. This is my year.

Now, getting into E3 isn't exactly easy. As an industry tradeshow closed to the consumer public, the organizers make a point of keeping the average person out of the show. Only the truly dedicated can make their way through the rings of security and onto the floor. Some get crappy jobs at Electronic Boutique or Gamestop with the hopes that they will eventually become managers and get sent to LA. Others make up fake business cards, or create false businesses to get an invite to the show. Still others toll away in the student press in the vain hope of some day getting a media pass to the show.

It took me almost a month to get my credentials certified, a tumultuous wait before I could purchase my plane tickets. A lucky break and some friendly help got me a place to stay. I was off to become a full-fledged gamer for life.

After a red-eye flight into the sprawling mass of suburb that is LA, and some much-needed sleep in a friend's hotel room, I got up at 7am to make the 8am breakfast/media briefing. After enduring a chaotic cab ride to the convention centre, which involved the cabbie trying to drive us through a security blockade, I was ready to begin.

I made my way to the doors more than an hour before they were to open and arranged myself among the already teeming masses of people.

By the time the security guards were set to unleash E3 to the world, I was worried about getting trampled by the multitudes behind me, who had taken up the entirety of the football-field-sized lobby. When the hour arrived, we moved forward as one, a throng of people with a single mind, and a single purpose.

Spread before me in the hall were hundreds of tall structures laid-out haphazardly, each with stretches of metal and lights screaming to grab attention away from each other. Booth attendants with skimpy costumes highlighting their plastic bodies stood poised to withstand the gaze of a thousand eyes. Huge screens and voices over loud speakers announced

upcoming games and products, and thousands of gaming kiosks littered the booth floors, ready for show-goers to sup in their demonstrations of unreleased product.

Quickly scanning my surroundings I found an open console and started playing. It was showcasing a new Incredible Hulk game in the style of *Grand Theft Auto*. I lost myself in the smashing and jumping, and jumping and smashing before finishing the objectives and turning around to try something else.

While I was lost in Hulttown, approximately an infinite number of people had come in after me. The show floor was now a collection of elbows and sweat, almost impossible to navigate. Within ten minutes of the doors being open, three-hour-long lines had formed in front of both Sony's and Nintendo's booths, with eager nerds waiting to watch PlayStation 3 tech demos and play the new *Legend of Zelda*, respectively.

Deciding that I needed to check out what was going on in the other hall instead of fighting for space with the diards in line, I made my way across to the West Hall to see Microsoft's booth. Having been constructed with a sleek modern amalgamation of steel and glass, the Xbox booth stood out as a zigzag of gaming and marketing synergy. With ramps creating two floors worth of space, an exclusive lounge and a section of offices in the back, the booth was a PR machine, designed to hollow out the minds of all who entered and replace them with visions of bliss in high definition. A few game demos later, I stumbled away from the Microsoft booth, dreams of Xboxes and *Halo* dancing through my head.

By this point, actually moving through the show floor became an active chore. People piled on top of people as they struggled to find the next big game or learn about the product they had been anticipating for years. I found that, when not pushing through crowds and being wowed by tech demos the majority of E3 is spent waiting line for stuff much like communist Russia.

As negative as this might sound, it isn't that bad; it allowed me to converse with my fellow show-goers, although now their conversation seems more like a blur than any one solid interaction.

"Did you see the *Devil May Cry 3* trailer? It sucked." "What line is this?" "Zelda I think. Well, I hope." "You've stood in line for two hours to 'hope' for *Zelda*?" "Yep." "Man, did you play *Burnout: Revenge*? It rocks!" "Did you see the *Frag Dolls* in action?" "I came up from Mobile to see this?"

The show was overwhelming. There were so many things, and so little time to see them all.

After I left LA two days later, I sat and thought about my experience in the expo. Looking at the media reports coming out of the conference, it became clear to me that everything had been covered with such detail on the Internet that an interested person could easily find out everything that I knew about the upcoming products hooked at the conference. In fact, in many cases, those who read the Internet knew more about what was going on than I did. Like a vitriolic street preacher, the sights and sounds of the show obscured as much truth as they revealed.

However, the experience of being attacked from all sides by information madness and coming together with 50,000 other like-minded individuals wasn't something that news reporting even attempted to convey. The purpose of the trip wasn't to find out the latest news about video games, as I may have thought: it was to come to the place where this particular industry, and this particular culture, came together and celebrated itself.

Of course, these words can't convey quite the experience of the trip: you might just have to find your way into E3 yourself.

SPORTS

sports@gateway.ualberta.ca • Thursday, 9 June, 2005

Bears hockey to play three NCAA teams in Minnesota

University of Minnesota, Minnesota State and St Cloud State will all face defending CIS champ Bears in early October scrimmages

ROSS PRISAKOWSKI
Sports Writer

A debate that has stood the test of time may finally be resolved when hockey season rolls around: if pitted in a setting conducive to each combatant, could a Golden Bear defeat a Golden Gopher?

The Bears will swing through Minnesota from 6-8 October and are slated for contests against the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers, Minnesota State Mavericks and St. Cloud State Huskies. These games will mark the first time since the 2001/02 season that the Bears will be going south of the border with the opportunity to face some tough NCAA competition.

While Minnesota State and St. Cloud State have been respectable NCAA programs and should provide good opposition for Canada's top university squad, they won't be the toughest team on the trip. That honour will go to the Golden Gophers—who are owners of five NCAA titles, including back-to-back championships in 2002 and 2003, and a team that is consistently ranked among the best in US college hockey.

Facing off against high-quality opponents doesn't intimidate Bears head coach Rob Daum, who believes his team will match up well with some of the best the NCAA has to offer.

"We're always been competitive when we've played against NCAA teams [in the past]... It's just really difficult for teams to make these kind of trips, because you're always playing in someone else's arena and you're always playing with things in favour of the home team," said Daum. "We have a history of being very competitive in these types of games, and I don't think it will be any different this time around."

"We're not looking at this as a chance to prove anything. I think we've proven in the past that we were competitive with any university in North America, and this isn't a trip for us to try and demonstrate that again," said Daum.

While the Bears aren't looking to show the American teams how good they are, the battle between two of the best hockey programs on the continent will provide more fuel to the debate over whether or not there is a disparity between the skill level of the two university hockey circuits and if the CIS is an inferior league, a notion that



BIG GOALS Ben Kilgour (pictured) and the rest of the Golden Bears hockey team will go up against three top hockey programs this fall in Minnesota. FILE PHOTO: INCK WEBER

Daum rejects.

"I think the skill level [between the two] is very comparable. If you take the top teams in Canadian university hockey, they're comparable with any of the teams in the NCAA," said Daum. "I think there's more depth in the NCAA. I think there are a greater number of teams playing at a higher level overall, but our top teams here would be very competitive with any of their top teams."

Bears fans who want to see their team take on

NCAA competition will be hard-pressed to see it locally, as it's been five years and counting since any NCAA school rolled into Clare Drake. A variety of reasons, the least of which being stringent rules regarding non-conference play, make it doubtful that an American team will be coming to Edmonton at any foreseeable point in the near future.

"The [NCAA's] rules are very restrictive. It's not as easy for them to play here. [With] the rules they have regarding travel, they have to plan well

in advance to do those types of things," explained Daum. "Having said that, come Christmas time [opportunities for high-quality games and tournaments in their own country]. So they're not as likely to travel, because it's just as easy for them to get some top-calibre competition close to home."

After completing their trip to Minnesota, the Bears will begin their defense of their championship the weekend of 14 October.

Basketball recruit aims to exceed expectations in his first year

Andrew Parker brings his high-flying act to Don Horwood's hoop team with hopes of becoming a marquee player

CHRIS O'LEARY
Sports Editor

When most people are using the hour between noon and one for their lunch break, Andrew Parker uses his as a measuring stick for the upcoming basketball season.

While the Golden Bears' basketball recruit has made a regular habit out of picking playball up in the Main Gym over the last year, the competition in these sorts of games is always questionable. However, after Parker spent the first few games of the day driving at will and nailing pull-up jumpers on his opposition, a team with former Golden Bear standout Phil Scherer made his way onto the court. The unquestioned authority he held wasn't the same with a former first-team all-Canadian defending him, but Parker wasn't completely contained, either.

"After playing with Scherer now, that's an eye-opener. I've got to work that much harder," the 6'5" guard-forward said after the scrimmage. "But, that's what I do. Every day I'm in the pavilion, at the YMCA ... just [working] every day with no rest."

Parker's work ethic is paying off for him. After transferring to the University from Concordia college, he spent last season rounding out his game, adding an outside shot, ball-handling and passing skills to a level of athleticism that may be unparalleled in the Canada West division. Golden Bears' head coach Don Horwood has said Parker has

"NBA athleticism."

"360 between the legs, 360 behind the back, behind the back in the air ... I used to do foul line until I hurt my ankle and I haven't tried it again," he said of the highlight reel-worthy dunks he can put down. "I'm one of the few who can do what [NBA athletes] can do, let's put it that way."

Parker has been showing off what he can do to a wide audience lately. In April, at the Golden Bears identification camp, he was dominant at times, as the sounds of his emphatic jams consistently drew all eyes in the gym to the court he was playing on.

"ID camp is the ID camp. I saw everyone around me and I didn't see anyone like me," he said. "When I went to the States, I saw a couple guys like me, but I'm still unique."

He credits much of his basketball success to his older brother Steven, who played on the last Bears team to win a national championship, back in 2002. "When you have a brother who's the best [player] in the city, when you have that to look up to, you have to be good. Sometimes it's good to have a bully [around you]: someone stronger, smarter, better than you; for me, it's good because now I'm well recognized, well accepted. If it wasn't for Steve always being better than me, I probably would have picked up checkers or chess or something, not basketball."

Whether his brother may have helped him learn the game, and his athleticism will undoubtedly generate attention for him over the next few years,

Parker remains grateful to Horwood for giving him the opportunity to suit up for the Bears.

"When you have a brother who's the best [player] in the city, when you have that to look up to, you have to be good. Sometimes it's good to have a bully [around you]: someone stronger, smarter, better than you; for me it's good because now I'm well recognized, well accepted. If it wasn't for Steve always being better than me, I probably would have picked up checkers or chess or something, not basketball."

**BEARS' RECRUIT
ANDREW PARKER**

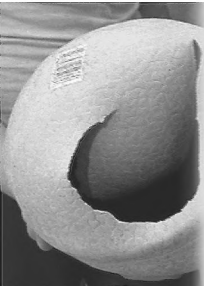
"I respect Horwood a lot. He took a really, really big gamble on me. A lot of people would say I'm not coachable but, really, I am; I just haven't had a coach in over two years. He's been very loyal to

me and I respect loyalty, because that's basically what I live on: loyalty to my family and friends. I respect Horwood so much."

After watching the Bears from the stands this past season, Parker has set his sights on proving himself to his opponents in the Canada West division.

"O'Neal Gordon at Brandon has got hops, but honestly, I'm a big-time competitor, so I'll never give him full credit, especially when I know I can do the things that he can do. Hopefully I can do those things and then some, but he's been in this league for a while and I'm just coming in. I'll give him some credit, but not full. We're both competitors—he'd understand that," Parker said. Parker, along with backcourt players Alex Steele and Jeff Lander, forwards Jeff Stork, Ryan Kram and Cranbrook's Harvey Bradford make up the list of Horwood's six incoming recruits. Considering the depth of Alberta's roster, Parker may not see a great deal of court time in his inaugural season as a Bear. He remains focused on working his way into the rotation and notes that the team will be in a good position to win a lot of games in 2005/06.

"[Whether] it's Saskatchewan, Lethbridge, Carleton, anybody. We just want to win. I think we got a winning mentality. We've just got to convert that mentality into productive energy and let that do the rest. There's no reason that we shouldn't be in [nationals next season]. That's a big thing to say, but I always play for the highest achievements."



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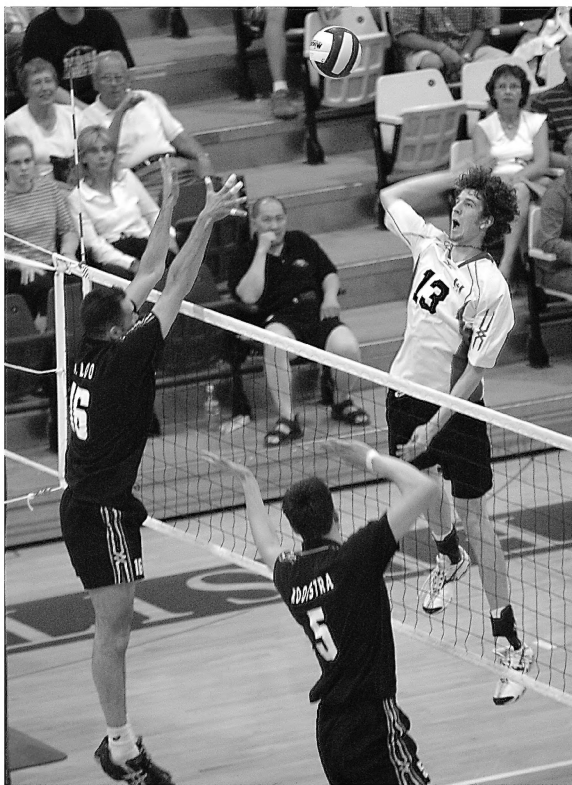
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LEARNING EXPERIENCE Although Canada's A2 men's volleyball team (of which half of the roster consists of Golden Bears) lost all of their matches against the touring Netherlands over the span of a week, they still feel that they learned a great deal. This was readily apparent in their final match last Sunday (pictured) in the Main Gym, where they played the best match of their province-wide tour, taking the Dutch to five sets 25-23, 13-25, 25-17, 22-25, 13-15.

Hoop gods can't stand the Heat



CHRIS O'LEARY

Sports Commentary

As the Detroit Pistons brought the championship hopes of the Miami Heat to a crashing halt on Monday night, it confirmed a theory that has been discussed for years in basketball circles: the basketball gods are the most sadistic group of gods you'll ever encounter.

This isn't a title that's easily thrown around. Consider the actions of the gods of war, of celebrity culture, or worse yet, reality television, and then re-think the actions of the basketball gods—they're on a level unto themselves.

There's an endless number of victims of the gods' cruelty, but let's focus on their most recent targets. Miami was playing brilliantly in the Eastern Conference Final. Dwyane Wade's manhandling of the Pistons in the first four games of the series was Jordan-like, as he was lighting up a Pistons team renowned for their defensive prowess to the tune of 27 points per game. Then, in game five, Wade, who was carrying the offensive load for an already injured Shaquille O'Neal, went

down with a rib-muscle injury. Miami went on to win the game and secure a 3-2 series lead. However, with their top two players now nursing injuries, Heat fans could only watch idly as the Pistons steamrolled a Wade-less Heat team in game six, and were able to pull away from the two injured superstars in the final minutes of game seven. The Pistons celebrated, Heat fans cried, and the basketball gods high-fived on another job well done.

Charles Barkley must have said something during his long, loud-mouthed career that irked the gods, hence his 15 years in the NBA without a championship.

As cruel as the basketball gods are, they're equally fickle. Charles Barkley must have said something during his long, loud-mouthed career that irked the gods, hence his 15 years in the NBA without a championship. Karl Malone, Reggie Miller and Patrick Ewing all saw their careers end with no rings to show for it. It's not that their teams weren't

good enough; it's just that they were victims of a higher power that easily holds a grudge.

Which brings us back to the Heat. When the gods don't like a team, they'll toy with them. They'll give them hope through the regular season and let them win anywhere from 50-60 games; they'll send them deep into the playoffs and let what was hope grow into belief; they'll even let the team get a win away from their goal (think of the 1994 Finals when the Knicks took the Rockets to game seven, then lost), and then, when success is within the team's collective grasp, the gods rip it away from them, crushing the spirit of anyone foolish enough to have believed that this year would be different.

However, like the parent who takes the keys out of their child's hand before they can get to an electrical socket, the basketball gods know what's best for fans of the game. While a Finals contest between the Phoenix Suns and Miami Heat may have been more entertaining to watch, the well-rested San Antonio Spurs and the defending champion Pistons are the two best teams in basketball. Before anyone writes this series off as a defensive struggle that will be settled under the basket, have faith in the gods—they haven't steered us wrong yet. Unless you hate the Bulls, Lakers, Spurs and Pistons, in which case, the gods may hate you too.

With just a little help from their friends

Edmonton quartet Five O'Clock Charlie hit the road with a full-length album, thanks to friends, family, and eager Saskatoonians



Five O'Clock Charlie

with *Storyboard* and *Bramwell* & *The Leftovers*
Powerplant
Thursday, 16 June

DAVID BERRY
Managing Editor

As local alt-rockers Five O'Clock Charlie have found out, it pays to have a little help from your friends. The quartet—composed of University of Alberta students Craig Schram (guitar/vocals), Steve Tchir (guitar/vocals), Trevor Belley (bass) and Dave Meagher (drums)—has had more than a little help getting their feet on the ground and ready to kick-off their first cross-country tour, and it's help that has come from everywhere, from their friends in local bands to some hospitable, good-natured Saskatoonians.

"At one show in Saskatoon, we were just like, 'We don't have a place to stay, can anyone give us a place to sleep?' and this group of five people was like, 'Hey, we've got a house,'" explains Dave Meagher, sitting in the Powerplant sipping a Coke as Craig Schram looks on. "We ended up staying at the home of some kid whose parents were away. It was great, we each had our own bed, and they made us breakfast in the morning."

Of course, a lot of the help the Charlies have received comes from closer to home—in fact, most of it actually comes from home, as the band members' parents have helped contribute everything from the van they're planning on touring in to the design for their first album, the recently released *Bicycle*.

"The album artwork was done by Trevor's dad. He painted this really nice sort of prairie landscape and a friend turned it into liner

notes for us," says Meagher, before adding, "Our parents are definitely supportive of what we do—they're not all painters, but they help out how they can. Like, my mom made cookies once, and we gave them out at a show. That was nice."

The biggest help, though, has definitely been their friends on the local music scene. From playing guest spots on the album to combining with the band to form the Five O'Clock Charlie Army—a loose amalgam of the regular foursome with members of *Storyboard* and *Bramwell* and the *Leftovers*, who coincidentally will be sharing the show's bill—the Charlies' friends have been around for them, even if, as Craig Schram explains, the whole idea of a group had somewhat suspicious beginnings.

"I think the whole thing was actually because I was reading Harry Potter, and people were talking about Dumbledore's army," he says as he looks down at the table, "and I was like, well, we should have a Five O'Clock Charlie Army."

"But it's always really fun to do it, and I feel like, this time, we're actually going to be really prepared for it," Schram continues. "And the Powerplant actually has the power and the stuff to do this. The other times we've done it, we've always been scrambling for stuff, like, 'Who has a microphone? We need to mic the cello!'"

"But, yeah, this one will be good. We always have jam parties with these people, anyway. We'll go over to Steve's house and bring our instruments, and..."

"Make noise," interrupts Meagher.

"Yeah, get drunk and—and make noise," adds Schram.

Hey, what else are friends for?

The Green Butchers just barely fit for consumption

Danish comedy about cannibalism in a meat shop is technically well done, but too many ingredients leave it feeling stuffed

The Green Butchers

Directed by Anders Thomas Jensen
Starring Mads Mikkelsen and Nikolaj Lie Kaas
Metro Cinema
10–13 June at 9:15pm

GEOFF CLARKE
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Sometimes a black comedy isn't so much "black" or "comedy" as it is stuck somewhere in-between exploring its dramatic subject matter and making a serious attempt at humour. A cult hit in its native Denmark, *The Green Butchers* is a self-billed black comedy that explores the taboo of cannibalism. Though competently made, the film seems confused about its direction: it is simultaneously too macabre to be a straight-up drama, while not funny enough to be labeled a comedy.

The film focuses on Bjarne and Svend, two disgruntled meat-shop employees who, in an attempt to show up their jackass boss, open their own butcher shop. After a fatal mishap involving a poorly electrician and a hasty decision to utilize his death for revenge upon their former employer, Bjarne and Svend find themselves the purveyors of their town's hottest meat-based sensation. This new-found popularity forces the pair to scramble for fresh supplies of the mystery meat, leading to a rising body count.

In order to pad out this main plot, writer/director Anders Thomas Jensen tacks on both a romantic subplot and a narrative involving Bjarne's estranged, brain-damaged twin brother, Sure, these plot strains somewhat meet in deepening Bjarne's characterization, but romance and brotherly relations don't exactly gel with the cannibal narrative, and accordingly feel



like filler.

However, the subplots are congruent with the film's tone. Jensen has filmed the movie like a character-driven drama, complete with sombre music and understated camera work. Although he manages to do this all competently, it is nonetheless hard to shake the feeling that the movie should have been either darker or funnier. In accordance with it being about selling human meat out of a butcher shop. The film's focus on character particularly hurts its surprisingly earnest ending, which imparts the tired old adage that the best way to succeed in life is to just be

yourself. Quaint, but an ending like this avoids dealing with the consequences of the characters' actions, which might work well with the film, but contradicts the character-driven storyline that Jensen was apparently making his secondary focus. All of this would be fine if the movie was more overtly comedic—comedies often contain sudden, nonsensical denouements—but in this dramatic framework, such a tidy resolution comes off as lazy.

Nevertheless, lead actors Mads Mikkelsen and Nikolaj Lie Kaas are effective as the titular butchers, despite their unappealing characters. Mikkelsen's

Svend is especially dislikeable; it feels like we're supposed to sympathize with this creepy, self-pitying loser, but doing so becomes difficult—if not impossible—when he begins murdering to compensate for feelings of inadequacy.

The Green Butchers is by no means a bad film; buoyed by its strong acting and unconventional plot, it does have moments of dramatic intensity. But because it is neither dark nor humorous enough to fully make the grade as a black comedy, the film works against the viewer's expectations of how one expects a subject as unconventional as cannibalism to be presented.

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Mr T In Your Pocket

TYSON DURST
Arts & Entertainment Writer

So now that you've got the first two seasons of *The A-Team* on DVD playing in your DVD player and the first issue of the new *Mr T* comic book playing in your comic book player, you must think that you've got all your fool-playing needs covered. Wrong, sucker!

Dirty innuendoes aside, the "Mr T In Your Pocket" electronic keychain is pretty handy for silencing a fool when they run off at the mouth with their "jibba jabba." Featuring six classic "bellows tough-guy sayings," including "T pity the fool," "Don't gimme no back talk, sucker," "Quit your jibba jabba," "Don't make me mad (GRRRR!!)," "First name mister, middle name period, last name T," and "Shut up, fool!" Mr T will always be there to back you up at the press of a button.

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Sleeperset sail

Eyes Like Forest Fires
Sonic Union
www.sleepersetsail.com

ELIZABETH VAIL
Arts & Entertainment Writer

If there was nothing else to say about the emo band Sleeperset sail, one could easily write that their song names are entirely appropriate. The majority of their CD, which is riddled with not-always-intentionally hilarious song titles like "antique bathtubs with feet on them," "killing birds with stones" and "(preferably two with one)," sounds like an exhausted Coldplay decided to record 10 songs—two of which barely pass as pretentious interludes—after drinking a litre of Nyquil washed down with a bottle of fine Merlot.

Their music tries to place so much emphasis on being arty and creative that the album winds up being ten long, trailing, tuneless, noise-filled tracks that make absolutely no effort to draw the listener in. It made me drowsy, yes, but it also made me wake up enough to turn off the CD player. A good thing, too: I suspect falling asleep to this music would cause some sort of permanent brain damage.



Tsunami Bomb

The Definitive Act
Kung Fu Records
www.tsunamibomb.com

JESSICA WARREN
Arts & Entertainment Writer

The tone of *Tsunami Bomb's* third full-length album clashes with the red-and-black colour scheme of its cover. Behind what seems to promise a dark and foreboding punk experience lies an album bursting with the hopeful words for the broken-hearted and the world-weary. In short, this album is clearly for teenagers, and almost painfully so.

Although far from musically stunning, *The Definitive Act's* lyrics make up for its lacklustre melodies with a generous helping of old-fashioned heart. This recording definitely won't be an average listener's first pick, but it's a safe bet for a 16-year-old rebel's commute home.

From the start, *TDA* contradicts itself, presenting a tough front that belies its mild interior. But once you come to terms with its mixture of flowers and bombs, it may help you believe that, yes, when it comes down to it, your stupid really is an all right guy after all.



Cinderella Man pulls no punches

Cinderella Man

Directed by Ron Howard
Starring Russell Crowe, Renée Zellweger
and Paul Giamatti
Now Playing

STEVEN CLARK
Arts & Entertainment Writer

It's odd how great change is brought about during times of great destruction—or, in the case of James Braddock, the Great Depression. In a time when the wealthy became rich and the poor became destitute, there were some people who managed to become heroes for the working class, all because they held onto their personal identities during the bleakest of times.

Cinderella Man features Russell Crowe as James J. Braddock, a marvelous boxer, but even more so a dedicated father and husband. Once on top of his game, the full swing of the Great Depression has hit Braddock hard. Braddock still held his reputation in never losing a fight, but, tired and worn out as a fighter, he was

decommissioned from boxing and forced to find work elsewhere. After scraping by for a time, fate shone down and gave Braddock—strong character still intact—another chance to fight.

True stories resonate on screen, especially when portrayed accurately, and this film shines on all aspects. From the style of Renée Zellweger's cloche hat, to the depression-era settings, director Ron Howard creates an environment as strong in character as Braddock's trademark left hook.

The film's boxing action alone is something to behold. Oozing blood, crunching bones, and double vision are brought onto the screen smartly. However, there is also time spent on the psychological aspect of fighting, such as sizing up the opponent, or a blood-filled grin that says who will win. It sounds sick, but it works.

The dramatic nature of the film is perhaps best shown in the camera-work, which portrays the movie's sentiment with variety not often seen in a standard boxing movie. Ron Howard used many free-moving

shots to capture the range of emotion placed on the screen. For instance, the first view of the Depression-stricken Braddock is shot in a very jumpy and unstable fashion, while the camera movement when he enters the ring for the film's final fight is one long, fluid take.

Fluidity and consistency also apply to describe the array of performances in *Cinderella Man*. Never once does Russell Crowe instill any doubt of character as he moves seamlessly from being on top, then on the bottom, then back on top. You're seeing Jim Braddock throughout the film, not a man playing a role. Equal in their roles are Zellweger as the supporting and loyal spouse, Mae Braddock, and Paul Giamatti, with a brilliant portrayal as the ever-encouraging coach.

While it may be a bit of a sentimental tearjerker, *Cinderella Man* proves to be a powerful, emotional story that lives up to the hype generated by the names in the credits. What starts as a boxing movie finishes as a hard and literally true story about economy, family and life.

Frustrated by a volunteer's unwillingness to write a CD review, Russell Crowe was involved in a minor altercation at the Gateway office earlier this morning. After asking the volunteer several times to finish that Uncle Outrage CD review—and getting only attitude from said volunteer—Crowe totally lost his shit. Words were exchanged and he wound up throwing the phone against the volunteer. So please, don't piss off the man; write for the A&E section.

GATEWAY A&E

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Blonde Redhead's momentous past

New York band's turbulent history has inspired their work, but their eventful upbringing has made them more creative than ever

Blonde Redhead

with 302 Acid
New City
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JAMIS STORRIE
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Blonde Redhead have something in the works, but they're not talking. When asked about the new album they're planning, Simone Pace of the New York trio is tight-lipped: "I might say something that will be completely different later, and I don't want to make a fool of myself," Pace chuckles.

"We just started writing it two weeks ago," he explains. "I know we want to create something sonically developed, but not as rich or complicated as the last album ... but I don't think I should be talking about this. It's too early. I don't want to say anything I'll regret."

If it were any other group, one might be tempted to just expect more of the same, but the band—singer Kazu Makino and twin guitar/drummers Amadeo and Simone—have been dramatically changing their approach over the course of their last two releases. Formed in 1993, the group at first resembled their no-wave fellows Sonic Youth, but have moved during a period of dissonant art-rock releases into something that surprisingly resembled the classic pop of French provocateur Serge Gainsbourg. The move, says Pace, was conscious. "We wanted to have a more rich sound. We wanted to have an orchestra, so we started using more keyboards, Kazu started playing

the clavinet ... it took away from the guitars, but added different things."

"But," he adds, "it's not as complicated as it sounds. The most complicated thing I think is Amadeo having so many guitars."

If Pace downplays their dramatic shift of focus, it may come from the lack of a frame of reference: since distancing themselves from their mentors in the mid-nineties, Blonde Redhead has essentially worked in a genre of their own. "I never felt like we were really part of anything," says Pace. "We tried, but, being who we are, it was difficult to belong to something completely. I guess it had to do with the fact that we were not from here," he explains. Kazu was an art student from Japan when they met, and the Pace brothers had come from Italy. "We're very much loners."

"I think that the closest connection we ever found was with the Washington DC scene, when there were bands like Fugazi and Lungfish. It's because we felt we could relate to the people; they were warm and kind, so it was easy for us to feel like we belonged. But actually, at the very beginning, we were just researching, just trying to figure out what we could do and what was most natural for us."

What was most natural for the band first made itself overtly known on their acclaimed 2000 release, *Melody of Certain Damaged Lemons*, but listeners had to wait four years to hear the next step in that direction. Singer Makino was seriously injured in a horse-riding accident, which delayed the release of 2004's



Misery Is A Butterfly for quite some time.

There were also label issues; the trio moved from Touch and Go to 4AD for a variety of reasons, including wanting to own their own master tapes. *Misery Is A Butterfly* was paid for and recorded by the band itself before they signed. "It's very hard to put so much responsibility on a label," Pace says. "You get so upset if something doesn't happen. But, it wasn't extremely expensive, and still much cheaper than most albums.

We always find a way of not wasting money on stupid things."

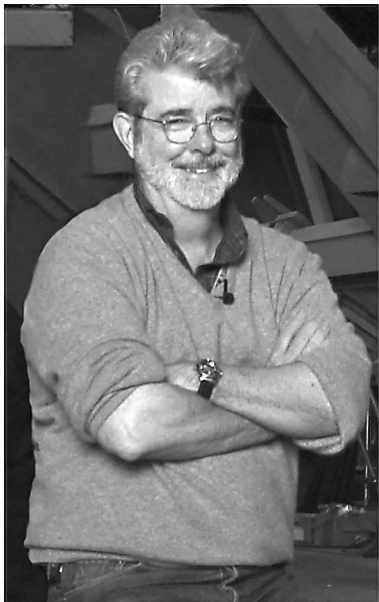
However, the hardship of these past few years has paid off; the group has seen increased success and toured widely. After playing Edmondton last week, the band is going off for a short tour in France, returning to North America to play Lollapalooza, and then spending some time in Iceland.

As their latest work has been more thoroughly produced and dependent on additional instruments, reworking the pieces for live play is an outlet

for creativity in itself. "It's a work in progress," says Pace. "We're still making changes, developing the songs while we play them, trying different things. The better we get to know them, the better we try, so things are always changing."

Edmondton listeners will soon have the opportunity to hear both the reworked material and the new pieces that Pace is so secretive about, and that in itself will be interesting. Yet as silent as the tight-lipped trio may be, their music does all the talking.

Star Wars may not be perfect, but Lucas gets it mostly right



LOOK HOW LOW-TECH HE IS! George Lucas doesn't even wear a digital watch.



TYSON DURST

as Jar Jar Binks singing a duet with Chewbacca, let's move on.

The other big area that Lucas has gotten criticized in is the visual effects department. People practically screaming, "Dammit George, everything is CG now! How I miss the Yoda puppet from *The Empire Strike Back* that came out 25 years ago!"

Frank Oz may be one of the best puppeteers in the business, but was he supposed to put on a blue body suit and then shove his hand up Yoda's 800-year-old rectum and perform all of Yoda's acrobatic stunts while also doing his lightsaber choreography?

Star Wars takes place in a galaxy far, far away, and digital technology is required to help bring that galaxy of Jedis, Wookiees, and clonstroopers to the screen for a new generation.

And all too often, people who sound off on special effects reveal that they are largely ignorant of how various scenes and sequences are achieved. They'd likely be surprised to find that there were still a lot of traditional techniques being used to bring the new *Star Wars* films to life.

Despite this, *Star Wars* gets trashed while complete digital back-lot films like *Sin City* or *Sky Captain* and the

World of Tomorrow—which relied on CG even more than a new *Star Wars* flick—get a free ride with nobody really calling them on it.

Star Wars takes place in a galaxy far, far away, and digital technology is required to help bring that galaxy of Jedis, Wookiees and clone-troopers to the screen for a new generation. Asking Industrial Light and Magic to throw away their computers would be like an editor asking me to toss my computer out the window and only write articles on a typewriter to get a more "real, nostalgic feel" out of my words.

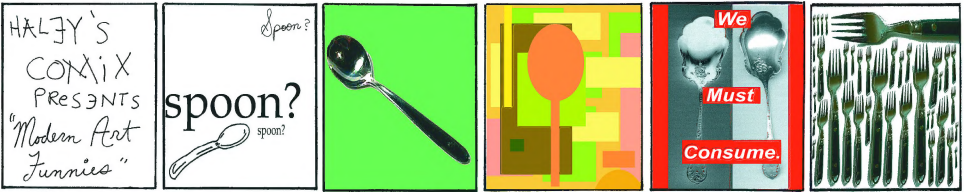
Is Lucas perfect? Of course not, and neither are his most famous films. They've got their share of flaws, but for me, George Lucas has done more good than bad with the *Star Wars* saga. Can you name another six-film franchise that gets people lining up for every film and smashes box office records all over the place? Few creations manage to reach the state of utter familiarity that *Star Wars* has achieved.

Like millions of other people, I've got my own little anecdotes about seeing *Return of the Jedi* in theaters when I was three years old, catching the *Star Wars* bug and then feeling that thrill again sixteen years later when I got an opportunity to meet Warwick Davis (Wicket the Ewok) and Anthony Daniels (C-3PO) in person.

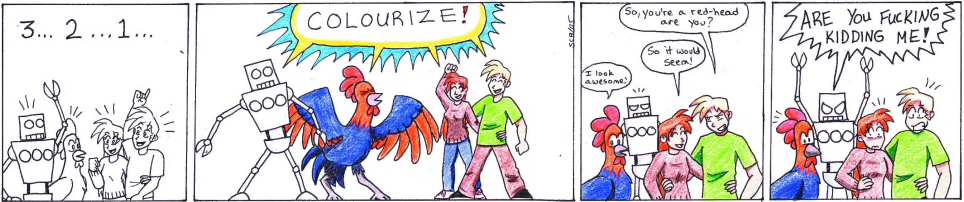
But you've likely heard many warm and fuzzy stories about the impact that this epic space opera fantasy has had on so many people, so I'll just cut it short and say, "Thanks, George."

Now, as Kevin Smith said in *Rolling Stone*, "we can all finally stop talking about fucking *Star Wars*."

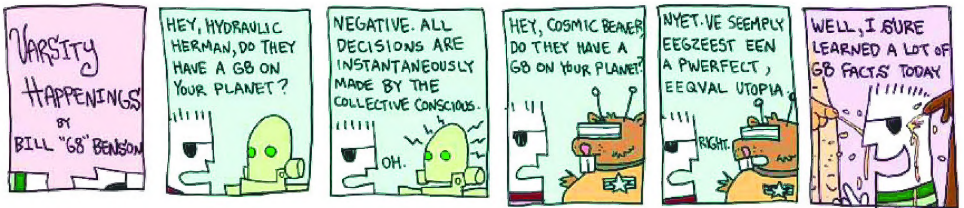
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THE STATUS OF THE GATEWAY SLO-PITCH TEAM

So, Wednesday 1 June was our first, and presumably only, double-header.

Our first game was against some team whose name I really don't remember. Anyway, they were pretty young, which was a nice change, but also had a guy who not only had batting

gloves, but also one of those weight things you put on bats when you take practice swings.

Needless to say, the highlight of that particular game for the good team Papermats was actually in our hit-around, when JB Tyson drilled a ball off RB Ross's nose, leading to no small amount of bleeding on Ross's part, and Tyson being promoted to the number one spot in the line-up.

Oh, and most importantly, Leah confirmed her status as Most Awesome Lord of Ratdown and Viscount of Cool with a delicious popsicle treat for the team at the end of the first game. We need more people like Leah, willing to bring us food, even though they're not technically on the team.

I believe the final score was too ridiculous to be recounted here, but I'm fairly certain that whatever team we were playing was indubitable digits, while we were in the low singles.

In the second game, we fared a bit better, thanks in large part to the team being of a slightly more similar skill level as ours, and some dupe on the other team firing up Iris by calling us pathetic (apparently, he reads the blog and knows of our team history).

Dave got two home runs (real, legitimate home runs this time, not error-assisted home runs): one where he almost killed Ross when he slowed down on third, and another a few innings later when he stepped up once again (this time with Ross safely in the dugout thanks to some inept base-running), and knocked one into damn near the same place.

rounding the bases before they even got the ball into the infield.

But we still lost... less pathetically so this time. Nonetheless, the entire team has pretty much stopped keeping score by now anyway.

LINES OF IRIS'S DRIVE

Our latest slo-pitch game was just as good as the previous slo-pitch games... as in we lost. But that's not the point.

More noteworthy though, this game solidified my position as the team's official accident magnet.

The most painful injury came when I attempted to slide onto first base during the second inning and ended up pulling a muscle in my left leg. It was so bad that I had to sit out the next inning and limp around for the next two days. I did "suck it up" and go up to bat later though.

Aside from that, the ball also hit me at the throat when I was trying to make an out, the opposite team's pitcher threw the ball at my ankle when I went up to bat, and accidentally whipped the bat at my ear when I swung my bat.

That is officially the benchmark bad day to measure all bad days against.

Since we're not publishing until 7 July, you'll have to look up our blog if you want to know more about our two games this week and our playoff game.

Don't pretend you don't read our blog.

The address is sadsnewspaper.blogspot.com.



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